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Heritage Speakers of Russian: Intersectionality, Identity, and Language Learning Anxiety

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Dedication

To the 2018-2019 Kindergarten Rams of KIPP Connections Elementary School, thank you for giving me hope, strength, and inspiration.

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Abstract

Heritage Speakers of Russian: Intersectionality, Identity, and Language Learning Anxiety

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This work discusses the notable contributions from the related fields of foreign language anxiety, heritage language learning, Russian heritage language, and heritage language anxiety studies in order to suggest manners of constructing a more complete and complex profile of Russian heritage language learners. While past research has contributed to the current understanding of heritage language learning and anxiety, there are bounds to be made in understanding the role of identity and anxiety in regard to heritage language learners of Russian, a perspective which is especially pertinent given the intricate linguistic landscape of modern Russia and surrounding countries which complicate ethnic, national, and racial affiliations. This report argues that a greater focus on Russian heritage language learning anxiety, with pointed and intentional consideration of identity and the multiplicity of cross-sections that impact an individual's access (inhibited or unfettered) to their identified heritage language would substantially add to the presently crafted profile of a Russian heritage speaker.

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> Language is an integral part if ourselves—it permeates our very thinking and way of viewing the world (Kramsch, 1998, p.77).

Foreword

In her 1998 work, *Language and Culture,* Claire Kramsch posed several extremely poignant questions regarding representation in linguistic literature:

> Who is entitled to speak for whom, to represent whom through spoken and written language? Who has the authority to select what is representative of a given culture: the outsider who observes and studies that culture, or the insider who lives and experiences it? According to what and whose criteria can a cultural feature be called representative of that culture? (p. 9).

Disagreement undoubtedly surrounds these types of introspective questions that academics often wrestle with, but as an author of a work discussing a cultural group that I do not belong to, I find it necessary to explicitly state my purpose and perspective. As a heritage speaker of Spanish, whose own cultural background is thoroughly represented by authors writing on the subject heritage speakers of Spanish, I myself have not felt my experience misrepresented in the literature and I certainly to cause that experience for others. The object of this work is not to authoritatively decide who can be called a heritage speaker of Russian or establish any sort of hierarchy to claiming that title, but rather to identify the realities that I feel have yet to be represented adequately in the existing literature. My intention is not to assign criteria to the group of speakers I am discussing, heritage speakers of Russian, but rather to advocate for further investigation into pertinent topics relating to their unique life experiences. I do not wish to speak as a final representative of Russian heritage speakers or to drown out their own voices with my own, only to assist in bringing light to overlooked factors in the circumstances of some heritage speakers of Russian.

Introduction

This work discusses the notable contributions from related fields, including foreign language anxiety, heritage language learning, Russian heritage language, and heritage language anxiety studies, and suggests the ways in which different approaches might assist in constructing a more complete and complex profile of Russian heritage language learners. Research in the field of heritage language learning has positioned these individuals as critical assets in an evolving and globalized world, who are uniquely apt for reaching higher levels of proficiency faster than second or foreign language learners, while foreign language anxiety literature has established that negative affective factors are generally correlated to negative classroom performance and lower outcomes. Studies on heritage language anxiety and identity have sculpted our understanding of the differences between heritage and non-heritage learners, including the unique effects of anxiety faced by heritage learners because of their relationship to their language, including additional social pressures and stigmas. However, literature discussing the intersection of heritage language learning and identity, specifically in terms of Russian heritage speakers in the United States, is severely lacking. While a handful of international works have examined heritage language learning in a few different contexts, the question of intersectional or conflicting identities and the U.S.-based Russian heritage speaker remains.

Once breached, elucidation on this topic would aid the progress in developing appropriate materials for heritage language speakers, already well under way, who exist in a distinct cultural space. Additionally, further exploration into this cross-section of disciplines would respond to recent approaches to heritage language learning that call for critical pedagogy, or incorporation of a more socially-conscious approach to language teaching. While traditionally Russian heritage language study has been tinged with

"language-as-a-resource" narratives, the potential for diversification of our current understanding of Russian heritage speakers and learners is great when we consider who they are, as opposed to solely potential language gains.

Review of the Literature

HERITAGE SPEAKERS & LEARNERS

In addition to the term "heritage speaker," the labels of "quasi native speakers," "home native speakers," "home background speakers" have been used in the past to identify "students who have a family background in which a non-English language is, or was, spoken" (Valdés, 2005, p. 412).[1] While the term "heritage speaker" has become the most widespread and accepted of these designations, the exact definitions vary—they are numerous and encompass everything from home environment to immigration status. Generally, heritage speakers are "individuals at the forefront of language shift, raised in homes where a language other than their current dominant language is spoken, and proficient in the dominant language and to some degree in the minority (i.e., home) language" (Valdés, 2001, p. 38).

A heritage language *learner* (HLL) is "a student of a language who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language" (Valdés, 2000b, p. 375). According to Montrul (2010), "heritage language learners are speakers of ethnolinguistically minority languages who were exposed to the language in the family since childhood and as adults wish to learn, relearn, or improve their current level of linguistic proficiency in their family language (p. 3)." Valdés (2005) discussed the challenge of instructing heritage language learners "within whose lives commonplace concepts such as mother tongue, first language, second language, dominant language, and

[1] Most of the fundamental works on heritage language learners and speakers, including Guadalupe Valdes' works cited in this section, focus on the context of the largely anglophone country of the United States. However, the relationship described here involving a English and a "non-English" language can be replaced with many other relationships between a majority and non-majority language, as will be discussed further in the section "Language and Identity: The Russian Context."

home language become problematic" and suggested a reconceptualization of the field of second language acquisition (p. 410). Heritage languages here are defined as "nonmajority languages spoken by groups often known as linguistic minorities," while heritage language learners are "members of linguistic minorities who are concerned about the study, maintenance, and revitalization of their minority languages" (Valdés, 2005, p. 411). Within minority language communities, heritage language students may hold a personal connection to the language, which would further encourage language preservation, contrasting with traditional foreign language students (Valdés, 2005, p. 410). In the U.S. context, heritage language students and speakers include children of Native American backgrounds, foreign-born immigrants who migrated at a young age, or native-born children of foreign-born immigrants.[2] These speakers, "bilingual individuals who manifest very different strengths in their two languages," generally receive most of their formal language instruction in English, while their heritage languages remain within their homes and cultural communities (Valdes, 2005, p. 413).

Swender, Martin, Rivera-Martinez, and Kagan (2014) noted that HLLs' "authentic-sounding language" and "apparent ease of communication" are often mistaken for HLLs ability to accomplish an extensive assortment of linguistic tasks and contend that in actuality, this generalization does not consider the wide range of proficiency levels among HLLs (p. 424). Swender, Martin, Rivera-Martinez, and Kagan (2014) cited HLLs who understand their HL, but do not speak it, or those who can only carry out basic daily tasks, for example. As stated, there is no one definition of a heritage speaker, or by extension, a heritage learner. In this work, HLLs are defined as follows:

[2] A heritage speaker of Russian in the U.S. could identify with any one of these criteria, with the exception of identification as a Native Russian, as opposed to Native American in order to consider Russian a heritage language.

> …those individuals who grew up speaking a home language other than the dominant language of the country in which they lived (in this case, the United States) and who switched to that dominant language (in this case, English) at an early age and received the majority of their education in an English-speaking school while continuing to use their HL in some contexts, most often in informal settings, e.g., at home and in the community. (Swender, Martin, Rivera-Martinez & Kagan, 2014, p. 426)

In addition to the issue of HLL language competency is the issue of language as identity and language as commodity. Researchers have advocated for the study of heritage language, speakers, and learners as a way of filling the national foreign language proficiency gap. Others, however, have spoken out against this "language-as-resource" narrative, which perpetuates "a view of language as instrument (as opposed to language as identity marker) …" and delinks language from ethnicity or race (Ricento, 2005, p. 357). In other words, the view promoted is of language as commodity, displaced from its historical situatedness, a tool to be developed for particular national interests (Ricento, 2005).

RUSSIAN HERITAGE LANGUAGE AND LEARNERS

The field of heritage language studies has grown substantially in the past decade, and while researchers have been primarily concentrated on more widely popular languages, such as Spanish, the study of less-commonly taught languages (LCTLs) in the United States, such as Russian, has gained traction as well. Kagan (2010) presented a profile of Russian heritage speakers and defined a Russian heritage speaker as "an individual who grew up in the U.S. speaking Russian at home but was educated mostly or exclusively in English. Such an individual is a bilingual whose weaker language is Russian" and a Russian heritage language learner (HLL) as "a heritage speaker of Russian who studies Russian at an American educational institution (pp. 214-215)," further stating that Russian HLLs are

mostly first-generation U.S. citizens, or part of the 1.5 generation (born elsewhere, but moved to the U.S. at a very early age).

Kagan (2010) compiled a profile from data collected through a survey conducted by NHLRC from 2007 to 2009 which attributes the following six characteristics to Russian HLLs:

> 1. First generation U.S.-born or 1.5 generation (arrived approximately before the age of 10). 2. Sequential bilingual: spoke Russian only before starting school. 3. Continues to use some Russian at home. 4. Retained some proficiency in speaking Russian and is comfortable with aural comprehension. Not infrequently starts speaking more Russian in late adolescence or young adulthood. 5. In college, becomes interested in learning about cultural and linguistic roots and improving language proficiency, particularly in expanding vocabulary. 6. Has a double or triple identity. (p. 223-224)

According to Kagan (2010), Russian HLLs described their listening proficiency as close to that of a native speaker but assessed their skills as intermediate in all other categories. Furthermore, in terms of proficiency, the HLLs surveyed felt confident in their ability to eavesdrop, understand humor, use polite language, and be rude, which Kagan marks as a differentiation from L2 learners. In terms of reasons from studying their heritage language Russian HLLs listed communicating better with family and friends in the U.S., learning about cultural and linguistic roots, and communicating better with family and friends abroad as their primary reasons (Kagan, 2010, p. 221).

Isurin & Ivanova-Sullivan (2008) suggested that Russian heritage speakers are "lost in between' in the continuum of language speakers," outperforming English-speaking learners skill sets such as correct use of verbal tense and aspect and cases, but simultaneously underperforming in these areas when compared to traditional native (monolingual Russian) speakers. The authors posited that their findings were determined by the "linguistic uniqueness" of their observed population of heritage language speakers,

who lack "native-like" proficiency, "whose first language was either incompletely acquired or underwent a certain changes due to L2 influence" (Isurin & Ivanova-Sullivan, 2008, p.100). Isurin & Ivanova-Sullivan (2008) described heritage speakers as lexically more diverse than L2 learners, as evidenced by their "full range of lexical, syntactic, and discourse means such as adjectives, various types of subordinate clauses, particles, interjections, etc." (p. 81) and further state that HS vocabulary as falling somewhere between L2 and monolinguals, showing few lexical gaps and in some cases the use of circumlocution to fill those gaps (p. 78). They concluded that "the acquisition of cases and VS word order may depend on age of arrival in the U.S., while the acquisition of tense/aspect may depend more on regular and extensive exposure to the target language than on the age factor" (Isurin & Ivanova-Sullivan, 2008, p. 97).

In addition to the linguistic elements that differentiate a heritage speaker from a non-heritage speaker, the issue of identity is present in previous works, but usually not emphasized or prioritized. Kagan (2010) discussed the identifiers respondents used to describe themselves and noted that answers varied considerably, with most students indicating some sort of dual identity (with those claiming "Russian" or "American" alone in the minority), such as "Russian/American," "Ukrainian-American," "American Russian," or more complex identities such as "Persian-Russian," "Russian and Serbian and American," "Russian American Jew." (p. 221). Additionally she noted through the reporting of open-ended responses on the effect of the language in students' lives, that most respondents described almost entirely positive effects of the language on their lives, though some reported instances of discomfort, such as causing a delay in learning English and therefore issues with socialization and communication at early ages (pp. 222-223).

In contrast to these works that provide general examinations of Russian heritage speakers, a far greater number of research has traditionally been focused on examining

specific technical aspects of Russian heritage language production generally (Marushkina & Rakhilina 2015; Vyrenkova, Polinskaia & Rakhilina 2014) or in specific aspects, such as indirect requests (Dubinina & Malamud 2017), grammatical gender (Laleko 2018), aspectual morphology (Mikhaylova 2018), conjunctions (Dengub & Rojavin 2010), or comparisons in outcomes between heritage speakers and non-heritage speakers (Kagan & Kudyma 2012). Additionally, there are a handful of reports on effective methods of instruction (Efimova 2015; Titus 2016).

Unfortunately, there are very few studies on Russian heritage language outside of the traditional context—that is to say, within U.S. higher education or formal learning environments. While the works discussed in the previous paragraph have largely focused on the U.S. context, a handful of studies have drawn more insight into Russian heritage language in the international arena with varying focuses. Such studies include Moin, Schwartz, and Breitkopf's (2011) investigation of parental beliefs and attitudes towards children's language acquisition in bilingual (Russian–German or Russian–Hebrew) kindergartens in Germany and Israel and Abreu Fernandes' (2018) exploration of heritage language practices in the context of "family talk," or Russian-Swedish mother-child interactions.

Within the previously described works lies an immense amount of quantitative data on Russian heritage speakers, most commonly in the form of technical accounts of specific language markers and comparisons between heritage and other types of speakers. What is lacking, however, is attention to less commonly studied contexts, that is to say, an informal language learning context, such as the home, in addition to a more qualitative take on the profiles of these speakers. The number of heritage language speakers greatly outweighs the number of formal heritage language *learners*, which would seemingly invite further inspection of the linguistic communities globally, outside of frequently examined

circumstances. Notably, two previously mentioned studies, Moin, Schwartz & Breitkopf (2011) and Abreu Fernandes (2018) both examine non-traditionally studied contexts, but still heavily emphasize speakers' parents, whether perception or actual language interactions. These perspectives are without a doubt valuable but help to highlight the lack of facets to our current understanding of Russian heritage speakers themselves as opposed to in relation or comparison to other categories of speakers.

Foreign Language Anxiety

Arguably one of the most commonly accepted definitions of foreign language anxiety (FLA) comes from Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986), who described the phenomenon as: "a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). In this landmark work, the authors drew connections between foreign language anxiety and what they argued are three related performance anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (p. 127). Furthermore, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) discussed authentic communication in the second language learning context as particularly problematic for language learners, because of the disparity in proficiencies in between an L1 and L2:

> Thus, adult language learners' self-perceptions of genuineness in presenting themselves to others may be threatened by the limited range of meaning and affect that can be deliberately communicated. In sum, the language learner's self-esteem is vulnerable to the awareness that the range of communicative choices and authenticity is restricted. (p.128)

According to the authors, "probably no other field of study implicates self-concept and self-expression to the degree that language study does" (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p. 128).

Scholars in the study of foreign language learning anxiety have concerned themselves with everything from creating ways to measure anxiety levels (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986; Saito, Garza & Horwitz 1999; Tallon 2009), characteristics and personality traits of an anxious learner (Bailey 1983; Gregersen & Horwitz 2002), focusing on anxiety's effect on students (Phillips 1992; Steinberg & Horwitz 1986), and differentiating components of anxiety, such as writing (Cheng 2002; Cheng 2004; Leki 1999), reading (Saito, Garza & Horwitz 1999), listening (Elkhafaifi 2005), speaking anxiety, or combinations of those aspects (Cheng, Horwitz & Shallert 1999).

Additionally, researchers have dissected the category of "effects of anxiety" and made notable contributions in the understanding of these components of FLA, including communication strategies (Kwon & Kim 2011; Steinburg & Horwitz 1986), and communicative willingness (Liu & Jackson 2008). Lastly, there have been a number of works delving into the more personal elements of FLA, including, students' perspectives and self-perceptions (Liu & Jackson 2008; Young 1990), and beliefs about language learning (Horwitz 1999).

The documented negative effects of foreign language learning anxiety include delaying enrollment in a foreign language course (Young 1991) and changing career goals or academic majors (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), found that students suffering from foreign language anxiety experienced "apprehension, worry, even dread. They have difficulty concentrating, become forgetful, sweat, and have palpitations. They exhibit avoidance behavior such as missing class and postponing homework" (p. 126). Overall, the literature has consistently shown a negative correlation between anxiety and achievement (Horwitz 2001, p. 112).

While there has been general consensus in the treatment of foreign language anxiety in the literature, the 90s and early 2000s saw pointed debate between two camps advocating

opposing theories on the cause of negative performance and achievement in the language learning environment: foreign language anxiety (Horwitz and MacIntyre) and native language skills (Sparks & Ganschow). Sparks and Ganschow's Linguistic Coding Deficit/Differences Hypothesis (LCDH), emphasized the role of native language aptitude in foreign language learning, proposing that the experience of learning a language "is enhanced or limited by the degree to which students have control over the phonological, syntactic, and semantic components of the linguistic Code." They further posited that the negative effects of language learning some experience, such as low motivation or high anxiety, are "a manifestation of deficiencies in the efficient control of one's native language, though they are obviously correlated with difficulty in FL learning" (Sparks & Ganschow 1991, p. 10).

MacIntyre (1995) criticized the LCDH for its omission of the language learning context, which had been established in the literature as a significant influence in the language learning process. Horwitz (2000) argued that the number of learners reporting feelings of foreign language anxiety far outweighs the number of those with cognitive disabilities and that Sparks & Ganschow's theory failed to account for anxiety experienced by high-performing students. Further, Horwitz (2000) critiqued the LCDH as being "based on a dated understanding of the nature of second language learning and teaching," reflective of a "limited understanding of second language learning" and called the rejection of the role of affective factors "myopic and ultimately harmful" (pp. 257-258). Despite the spirited engagement on both sides of the debate, most researchers have accepted the view of foreign language anxiety as a situation-specific anxiety and its role in creating effective barriers in language learning.

Scholars have explored the impacts of foreign language learning anxiety in the contexts of specific languages and learning situations. The languages vary greatly, the

results of these diverse studies even more so. Of interest is the fact that scholars have found similar anxiety patterns or behaviors in foreign language learners, regardless of the actual language of study. However, in other cases, findings are directly in conflict. Perhaps to be expected, the volumes of works have yielded virtually no conclusive, universal results, however some incarnation/iteration of foreign language anxiety exists in every one of these studies, generally yielding some type of negative result. It is important to note as well that most FLA studies have been done in university or formal schooling contexts.

Several strides have been made in the study of predictive and correlated variables to high foreign language learning anxiety. Saito and Samimy (1996), examined predictive performance variables and found that for beginning students, Year in College was the best indicator (students entering upper levels of Japanese classes as seniors or graduate students were predicted by their model to receive higher grades than students just starting college), while what they label "Language Class Anxiety" was the best predictor of final grades for both intermediate and advanced-level students (at this level students who felt "anxious and embarrassed" about using Japanese were predicted to receive low grades (p. 245). Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, and Daley (1999) found foreign language anxiety to correlate with a number of variables including age, prior history of visiting foreign countries, prior high school experience with foreign languages, perceived creativity, perceived intellectual ability, perceived self-worth, and individualism. The variables explaining the largest amount of variance were expected overall average for current language course, perceived scholastic competence, and perceived intellectual ability. The amount of deeply personal variables language anxiety was found to be correlated with in this case directly ties to the idea of language deeply impacting worldview and self-perception that was of deep importance even in early FLA research.

Researchers have come a very long way from the days when "second language research ha[d] neither adequately defined foreign language anxiety nor described its specific effects on foreign language learning" (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p.125). However, as with many, if not most, fields of study, there is vast room for growth, and there are particular areas of related interest that intersect with foreign language anxiety and have yet to be examined. In her review of the literature, Wesely (2012) suggestsed a number of ways to diversify and build on current research, including a reexamination of research methodologies (while preserving accepted theoretical frameworks), pushing for further clarity than explanations of "there was no difference," and exploration of subgroups beyond various heritage languages (socio-economic status, gender identity, ethnicity). She describes her work as "an argument for allowing many voices to examine learner attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs in a number of ways, but also for asking these voices to speak to one another without getting locked in an echo chamber that immediately discounts new paths of inquiry (Wesely, 2012, p. 111)." In the age of growing understanding of the importance of intersectionality, the significance of Wesely's suggestions carry even more weight, and the issue she raises of subgrouping becomes more pertinent as we examine the gaps in foreign and heritage language anxiety literature.

One such subgroup are heritage speakers and an important intersection being mixed-heritage speakers. Cohen & Norst (1989) differentiated language learning anxiety from other forms of anxiety by highlighting the fact that "language and self are so closely bound, if not identical, that an attack on one is an attack on the other" (p. 61) and went on to contend that second language learning demands that individual extend themselves in terms of self-representation: "essentially, to learn a second language is to take on a new identity" (p.63). Just as foreign language anxiety can be distinguished from other academically-associated anxieties, a similar conclusion can be drawn about heritage

language anxiety. When you are *supposed* to be able to express yourself in a language, because of its connection to your history, culture, and heritage, but you cannot communicate fully or express your true "self" there can be a number of negative consequences, as evidenced by findings in the heritage language anxiety literature.

HERITAGE LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Literature focused on foreign language anxiety faced by heritage learners is much sparser than the decades of study on the broader topic of foreign language anxiety, however, scholars have explored the unique context of heritage learners including labels of "heritage" and "non-heritage" speakers, comparisons between these two groups of speakers, specific markers of heritage language learning anxiety.

Xiao & Wong (2014) studied Chinese HLLs and found their mean FLCAS scores to be lower than non-heritage students, in addition to discovering that writing-related activities caused the most anxiety and reading caused more anxiety than listening. They suggested that this finding confirms the the variations in anxiety profiles between heritage and non-heritage speakers (since speaking is generally found to be the most anxiety-provoking activity) (p. 602). They went on to state that "since identity issues are at the center of their learning profile, developing a Heritage Language Anxiety Scale that both considers classroom activities and acknowledges other sociocultural variables is essential to a better understanding of these learners' predicaments (Xiao & Wong, 2014, p. 603)," joining other's in the call for a specific measurement tool for anxiety in heritage language learners.

Jee (2016) found their participants' mean FLCAS scores to be lower than other studies with non-heritage students (which Jee suggested indicates that HLLs are less anxious than non-heritage counterparts), while scoring lower than other heritage language

learners (p. 63). Furthermore, this study found that all three measures of anxiety (the FLCAS, the FLRAS, and the WAT) "were highly positively correlated with highly negative correlations to each corresponding students' achievement" (Jee, 2016, p. 68), and found that KHL students who perceived their cultural identity as Korean as having lower levels of anxiety as those perceiving their cultural ethnicity as American.

The significance of ethnicity and race and learners' self-identification of both should not be overlooked here, as it is a recurring feature in the heritage language anxiety literature, though often not explored past surface level, with the exception of a handful of truly remarkable works. As stated previously, Cohen & Norst (1989) emphasized the profound link between language and self. Additionally, one's self-concept often, if not always, depends upon factors of race and ethnicity. Therefore, just as language learning can be a source of anxiety for individuals, the learning of a language uniquely linked to an individual's race and ethnicity (as heritage languages are) can result in additional points of friction, because of the intrinsic and complex relationship between and individuals race or ethnicity and their self-concept, creating more potentially anxiety-inducing effects. Works that access this nuanced and intricate aspect of heritage language learning help to build a socially-conscious view of this reality.

Doerr and Kumagai (2014) explored "the interconnections between race and the notion of the heritage language speaker, and the effects of those interconnections in individuals caught in these categories" through the case of Jero, an African-American singer, described as "a quarter Japanese," who sings in and speaks fluent Japanese (p. 89). While Doerr and Kumagai (2014) breach the issue through a figure in the public eye, they explicitly linked these issues to everyday problems: "when we think about heritage language education, we need to think about appearance that inform the race of that person

that may overwhelm, even challenge, his or her association with the heritage language. (Doerr & Kumagai, 2014, p. 89)"

Lee (2005) took issue with the existing categories of heritage and non-heritage language learners, positing that they are not mutually exclusive and suggesting that educators need to recognize and adapt to the "'heritage-like' needs and goals of their non-heritage language learner group and the 'non-heritage-like' needs of their heritage language learner group," and championed the need to "broaden our understanding of the division between the two categories of heritage and non-heritage learners as a crucial first step in reconfiguring the development of student-centered pedagogical strategies by recognizing the range of individual variations that learners bring (p. 562-563)."

Another novel contribution of this work is the discussion of speakers' ownership of a language through ethnolinguistic affiliation or proficiency level. While some of Lee's participants felt the "right" to claim a language as their heritage language through "religious, ethnic, or cultural ties", others felt their proficiency level was more of a determining factor (Lee, 2005, pp. 558-559). Furthermore, Lee (2005) explored the anxiety-inducing role of cultural broker that heritage language learners are often expected to play:

> The role of the "expert" is taken up by the heritage language learners in the class. In other words, in order to claim status as a heritage language learner, one needed to be perceived by others as having a certain level of proficiency in the language that enabled them to act as a linguistic and cultural broker in class. The learners from the heritage language background who did not possess such competence admitted to feeling pressures of failing to live up to the expectation of others; for example, 65% of the Korean learners reported feeling such pressures. (p. 559)

Finally, Lee (2005) also discussed the issue of national language versus heritage language and listed examples of HLLs who had an ethnic connection to their language of study, but did not necessarily consider this their authentic heritage language, including a

Chinese student of Mandarin who considered Cantonese their heritage language and a student of Hindi who considered Bengali their heritage language. Lee stated: “It is difficult to characterize such learners as uniquely possessing the profile of a heritage language learner or a non-heritage language learner,” because they are differentiated from a true beginner because of their familiarity with the language, and yet, not proficient enough to be perceive as a true native speaker (Lee, 2005, p. 260).

In a work also focusing on less commonly studied languages, Sevinç and Dewaele (2018) suggested that within immigrant communities, where individuals are exposed to both heritage and majority languages, “the official language of their country of residence is also neither a foreign nor a second language” and thus described the need for research on majority language anxiety (MLA) (p. 160). This idea builds on Tallon’s (2009) suggestion that the type of anxiety heritage speakers experience can not exactly be classified as FLA, since they are not strictly L2 learners, but complicated the issue by considering the social status of the language communication in a given situation by certain individuals.

Ultimately, in their study of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, Sevinç and Dewaele (2018) found that while first and second-generation immigrants generally experience MLA, second and third generation immigrants are more prone to experience HLA. First generation immigrants were found to experience HLA only when speaking Turkish around Dutch people in the Netherlands, while third generation immigrants experienced HLA in all contexts considered, including speaking Turkish with family, with or around Turks in Turkey, and with friends in Turkey (Sevinç and Dewaele, 2018, p. 165). Regarding MLA, first and second-generation immigrants experienced it most in the context of interactions with or around Dutch people.

HERITAGE AND IDENTITY: THE THIRD SPACE

The issue of heritage language learning and heritage language learning anxiety are almost inseparable from question of identity. Just as second or foreign language learning is a profoundly personal experience for learners, so then is the formal learning or relearning or a heritage language for heritage learners. Norton (2013) defined identity as "the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 4). In the case of a heritage speaker or heritage language learner, whose identity, by definition (at least in the U.S. anglophone context) is connected to the world through at least two different cultures, understanding the structure of that relationship and possibilities it suggests for the future has the potential to become quite an entangled process.

Researchers have made several contributions towards the end of understanding the cultural space a heritage speaker stands in when formal learning a heritage language. Of interest is the emergence of calls to action surrounding the topic, including the use of critical pedagogy to alleviate some of the tension that accompanies formal heritage language acquisition (Leeman, Rabin & Román-Mendoza 2011). A large subsection of heritage language literature is focused on heritage students of Korean and Spanish, respectively, though a number works treating both minority and majority languages have entered the body of literature.

Kim (2003) examined the perspectives of Korean heritage language students and drew two important conclusions about students' motivations "learning of the language in college is closely tied to an affirmation of their ethnic identity" and that students "look for a discovery or validation of their cultural and linguistic heritage in language class" (p. 324). These sentiments are evidenced in part by one participant's reflection on their language learning: "the Korean that I learn is most like a personal development... One of the biggest

reasons I wanted to take Korean was like, since I am Korean, I feel really bad about not knowing my own language and so that was the whole identity thing" (Kim, 2003, p. 319). In Kim's (2003) case, language learning functioned as "a symbolic marker of ethnicity" (p. 324), though this is hardly unique to this particular study, Korean heritage language learners, or university-level students.

Jo (2010) also focused on Korean heritage learners and found a number of negative effects unique to the classroom heritage language learning process. For one, the loss for words was particularly difficult for speakers, as it translated to a distance from the "homeland" and important cultural connections (Jo, 2001, pp. 31-32). In addition, exposure to standardized forms of a language complicated students' relationships and previous experiences with their heritage language. Jo (2010) found this element of formal Korean instruction to "frustrate their [learners'] own desire to speak live 'native' Koreans" (p. 36). Lastly, in this study, Korean heritage students to held higher expectation for themselves in their native or heritage language class than other language classes taken simultaneously and they consistently self-evaluated their performances as unsatisfactory (despite the actual objective quality of their output) as "their positions are continuously negotiated in relation to more fluent Korean speakers in and out of their classes" (Jo 2001 p. 39). A unifying thread between the effects examined in Jo (2010) is the element of authenticity. Researchers have found that heritage speakers struggle with viewing themselves as "authentic" speakers of their heritage language.

Critical Observations on the Literature

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY: THE RUSSIAN CONTEXT

Traditionally, and notably in the United States, individuals are thought to have one native language, however in reality an individual may have two or more native languages. Estimates place Russia's bilingual and multilingual population at between 15-20% (Zamyatin, Pasanyen, & Sarikivi, 2012, p.8). Zamyatin, Pasanyen, and Sarikivi (2012) stated that a person's mother tongue can be determined by a number of factors including age of acquisition, language competence, and ethnic identity. The authors' statement once again illuminates the issue of trying to calculate an exact definition of what a native or heritage language is. As described in the previous section, language competence, ethnic identity, and *perceived* language competence and ethnic identity prove to be particularly challenging internal conflicts for heritage language learners.

Zamyatin, Pasanyen, and Sarikivi (2012) described what a minority heritage speaker's situation may look like in the Russian context:

> In Russia, it is often the case that a person will learn a native language in early childhood, Tatar, Mari or Yakut for example. However, at school they studied in Russian, and therefore Russian became their first written language. Often such a person reads and writes in Russian better than in their home language, and it is also easier for them to speak Russian, for example, about public life or on some special topics. Home language, in turn, is closely related to home, family environment and daily life. (p.9)[3]

The case described here is not unlike the situations described in Kagan (2010), which focused on the Russian population within the United States.

[3] Original text: "В России обычно явление, когда человек в раннем детстве выучил родной язык, например, татарский, марийский или якутский. Однако,в школе он обучался на русском языке, и поэтому русский стал его первым письменным языком. Часто такой человек читает и пишет по-русски лучше, чем на своем домашнем языке, а также ему проще говорить по-русски, например, об общественной жизни или на какие-то специальные темы. Домашний язык, в свою очередь, тесно связан с домом, семейным окружением и повседневной жизнью."

The authors went on to comment that this person's native language, according to the factor of competency, could be either Russian or their home language, but when ethnic identity is considered, the issue becomes more complex. "Despite the fact that only one nationality can be written on a Soviet passport a person may, in fact, have a whole set of ethnic identities; according to their father, mother, place of residence, etc."[4] **(**Zamyatin, Pasanyen, & Sarikivi, 2012, p.10). Kryazkov (2007) also discussed the difficulties in defining a "native" language, but stated that ultimately, a person decides for themselves. However, this task is distinctively complicated for individuals whose intersectional identities create tension between their affiliations, such as when a speakers' heritage (minority) and national (majority) language are in direct conflict.

In order to further illuminate the distinct status of heritage speakers, clarification on the social position of minority or majority language is necessary. The majority language of a community, "defines social values, it organizes education, the media and government **(**Zamyatin, Pasanyen, & Sarikivi, 2012, p.13).[5] It is important to note that these terms describe the prestige of a language, as opposed to size of the population of speakers. For example, there may be less speakers of the majority language in a given community, but this does not lessen the social value of the majority language. In many cases, the numerical majority may remain the linguistic minority. However, Russian has traditionally served as the overall majority language and has dominated the region for centuries (Dyachkov 1995).

The counterpart to minority and majority language systems then is generally one-sided bilingualism, where "the speakers of the minority language speak the language of the majority, and the majority, in turn, do not know the minority languages" **(**Zamyatin,

[4] Original text: "Несмотря на то, что в советском паспорте могла быть записана только одна национальность, человек может, по сути, обладать целым набором этнических идентичностей; по отцу, матери, месту проживанию и т.д."
[5] Original text: "…нем организованы образование, средства массовой информации и управление."

Pasanyen, & Sarikivi, 2012, p. 12).[6] It is often the case that while a minority language can serve a numeric majority, the language may be still restricted to informal domains, such as personal, social, and familial communication, while professional or official aspects of community life are still conducted in the majority language. Such is the case in the Izhma region in the north of the Komi Republic, where 85% of the population are Komi and 10% Russian, but life would be difficult without knowledge of the Russian language, but hardly impacted by ignorance of the Komi language (Zamyatin, Pasanyen, & Sarikivi, 2012, pp. 13-14). The phenomenon of one-sided bilingualism is not unique to Russia, it speaks to a greater circumstance of major language dominance. While bilateral bilingualism is not completely unheard of on the global scale, it is not generally the most widespread form.

It should be noted, however, that the division between a majority language speaker and a minority language speaker is often not drawn by a bold, distinct line:

> A person who has learned several languages and cultures since childhood, in different situations and in different periods of life, naturally identifies himself with different linguistic communities. Thus, an individual can simultaneously be a member of a minority group as well as a member of the majority group. *(*Zamyatin, Pasanyen, & Sarikivi, 2012, p.10)[7]

"The problem lies in equating the racial, ethnic, national identity imposed on an individual by the state's bureaucratic system, and that individual's self-ascription" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 67). The issue then is not simply what languages we ascribe societal value to and what languages we do not, but rather the implications and consequences of this imbalance and its impacts on individuals. For example, "People who by choice or by necessity, have

[6] Original text: "…носители языка меньшинства владеют языком большинства, а большинство, в свою очередь, языков меньшинств не знает…"

[7] Original text: "Человек, который с детства узнал несколько языков и культур, в различных ситуациях и в разные периоды жизни естественным образом отождествляет себя с разными языковыми сообществами. Таким образом, индивид может быть одновременно как членом группы меньшинства, так и членом группы большинства."

traditionally been bi- or multilingual like migrants and cosmopolitans, have often been held in suspicion by those who ascribe to themselves a monovocal, stable, national identity" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 74). Another problem that arises from this external conflict may in fact be a deeply internal one. As reviewed in the "Heritage Language Anxiety" section of the review of the literature, heritage language learners may feel distanced from their heritage language and culture because of prescribed or self-imposed idealizations of a "perfect" or "native" speaker, the added complication of assumed ascription to a certain identity restricts individuals in the formation of a truly "individual" self-conception, yet another source of internal discord.

Rationally, one definition of "Russian" or "Russian speaker" does not exist. According to Voskresensky (2017), recent studies have shown that only 16.2% of Russians can consider themselves "indigenous Russians," meaning that the remaining 83.8% of the population represent a diversity of other ethnicities and races, challenging the strict idea of "Russianness." In addition, a variety of other factors such as character traits, qualities of the mind, attitude towards others, general behavior, etc. impact what it means to be Russian (Namlinskaya 2006).

According to Evseeva (2009):

> Each national language is a cultural construct that owes its origin to a particular person/people. The formation of nations itself is partly a consequence of the process of linguistic standardization. Standard state/national language is a kind of language idea. The identification of nationality with the idea of a language is characterized by the ideological constructions of nationalist intellectuals, and not by the real self-awareness of ordinary speakers of the given language. (p. 6)[8]

[8] Original text: "Каждый национальный язык представляет собой культурную конструкцию, которая своим возникновением обязана конкретному человеку / конкретным людям. Само формирование наций отчасти является следствием процесса лингвистической стандартизации. Стандартный государственный / национальный язык - это некая идея языка. Отождествление национальности с идеей языка характеризует идеологические построения националистически настроенных интеллектуалов, а не реальное самосознание обычных носителей данного языка."

Though these ideas are constructed for and not by individuals, this does not alter the fact that they are idealizations for individuals to measure themselves against and potential inducers of confused linguistic identity.

Suggested Areas of Investigation

INTERSECTIONAL AND DUELING IDENTITIES: RACE, ETHNICITY & NATIONALITY

Norton (2016) remarked that "language is not only a linguistic system of words and sentences, but also a social practice in which identities and desires are negotiated in the context of complex and often unequal social relationships" (p. 476). "Complex" and "unequal" are extremely befitting adjectives for the current ethnolinguistic landscape of Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Union form an entangled network of ethnic affiliations competing for revival, or in some cases, simply survival, which foments conflict as individuals negotiate these identities. When we consider the question "Who is a Russian heritage speaker?" a prototypical image comes to mind, but we must stretch ourselves to form a deeper understanding of speakers who fall outside this constructed conceptualization. Existence in these gray areas may itself be anxiety producing in an individual's conceptualization of their identity and heritage, an experience deserving of a more critical lens. According to Evseeva (2009) "Constitutive principles of ethnicity are based on feelings (of belonging, solidarity, feeling "ourselves" or "alien"), and not on awareness and rationality (p.14).[9] Herein lie potential conflicts for heritage speakers, who logically know their affiliations, but because of underlying or overwhelming circumstances, may dissociate from or realign their "rational" identity, which creates a uniquely colored existence for heritage speakers of Russian who embody multiple identities at once and complicate our idea of a heritage speaker.

Scholars have made arguments for the analysis of "non-traditional" heritage speakers, or speakers not belonging to or having links to an ethnic group historically linked to that heritage language. In the case of De Feo (2017) Anglo speakers were studied as

[9] Original text: "Конститутивные принципы этничности строятся на чувстве (принадлежности, солидарности, чувстве «своих» и «чужых»), а не на осознании и рациональности."

"non-traditional" heritage speakers of Spanish, because of their tie to Spanish-speaking cultures through their lives in the Southwestern United States. While this is arguably a controversial interpretation of the term "heritage speaker," even with the added "non-traditional" caveat, that marker is particularly relevant in the Russian context. As discussed, the uniquely complex ethnolinguistic landscape of what is currently the Russian Federation, not to mention the additional territories of the former Soviet Union, leaves a large population of speakers in a gray area of linkage and claim to Russian as a heritage language.

In the Russian Federation there are over 160 ethnic groups, including Tatars, Chuvashs, Bashkirs, Chechens, and while Russian is official state language, roughly 35 languages are considered official in some capacity within Russian republics. Furthermore, in 1991, 25 million Russians and found themselves left outside the borders of the newly formed Russian Federation (Rutkevich 2005). The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the appearance of multiple new nations on the world stage, which "aggravated interethnic and inter-ethnic relation"[10] as well as "observed processes of strengthening the interactions of various nations and ethnic groups among themselves (Evseeva, 2009, p. 2).[11] Ultimately, the process of collapsing and rebuilding nations and identities has created complex relationships between the Russian language and people within and outside of modern Russia.

Countries with particularly strong, though sometimes strained, relations with the Russian Federation, for example, Ukraine and Belarus find themselves in unique linguistic situations. As of 2005, 90 percent of Belarusians and 50 percent of Ukrainians spoke Russian every day and considered it their native language. Until just a century ago in 1917,

[10] Original text: "…обусловило обострение межнациональных и межэтнических отношений…"
[11] Original text: "…процессы усиления взаимодействия различных наций и этносов между собой…"

practicing Orthodox Christian Ukrainians and Belarusians were officially called Russians and even before then these territories along with Russia were all considered Kievan Rus (Rutkevich 2005). Krylov and Gritsenko (2012) discussed language and identity at the Russian-Ukrainian and Russian-Belarusian borders and found that the interaction of regional, ethnic, national, and other affiliations led to a combination of identities and the evolution of a certain "frontier identity" or "cross-border identity," a consequence of living between two worlds (p.29).

In addition to the bordering East European countries of Ukraine and Belarus, particular linguistic linkages exist between Russia and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where Russian is still an official language, in addition to tumultuous situations in the Caucasus region. Moreover, heritage speakers of indigenous Russian languages as well as Russian, face an existential threat, being the extinction of one of their heritage languages. Scholars have advocated for the preservation of Russia's indigenous languages, such as those spoken in the North, Siberia, and Buryatia, including Soyot and Evenki (Koptseva 2014), and those of other ethnic minorities (Tukhvatullin 1997), in addition to calling for modernization of language policy (Vasilveya 2006) and preservation of cultural heritage (Pimenova 2014). It should be noted that even Belarusian, a language with a more robust speaking population than most indigenous Russian language, is considered dying by some as well (Kalita 2010). Thus, the sheer complexity of Russia's ethnopolitics alone, warrant investigation of these effects on the heritage language learner.

In the U.S. context, speaker who themselves or whose ancestors have emigrated to the United States carry marks of this linguistic footprint with them. Therefore, there are a number of questions that arise when considering the potential anxiety-inducing effects ethnic and national background may have on a heritage speaker: Is a heritage speaker of an indigenous Russian language and Russian more likely to lose their connection to the

minority language in a context where that language is even more rare? What effects does this potential disconnect have on speaker? How do heritage speakers of Russian from countries or republics in conflict with Russia (at a given time), such as Ukraine or Chechnya negotiate this external conflict? Does it affect their language use or provoke any anxiety about use of the Russian language?

Kagan (2010) reported that Russian HLLs surveyed through the NHLRC in 2007-2009 held mostly positive ideas of their heritage language, however, there were named instances of negative impacts. Such is the case in the following open-ended responses from participants, describing some unfavorable consequences of their heritage language knowledge, including both internal and external hurdles, ranging from relatively mild or increasingly adverse. Two respondents noted consequences that could potentially affect any HLL: "My heritage language also made me more shy and unsure of myself, therefor[e] making it harder to make new friends," and "I find people's reactions to my heritage language to be sometimes annoying when I live in places where there is little diversity." However, a final example that speaks to the conflicts that can arise from simultaneously embodying dueling identities, "I went to religious Jewish schools up until high school, and there, it was highly undesirable to be Russian. So Russian held a sort of stigma for me in that setting, but I liked to talk to people in Russian outside of school in Russian" (Kagan 2010, p.223). As evidenced by the last speaker's report, friction can arise from this type of diversity, and these identity markers only scratch at the surface of the complexity birthed from such an extremely nuanced ethnolinguistic landscape as currently exists and has historically existed in Russia.

Kremer (2010) discussed the internal conflicts that can arise within bilingual speakers in regards to forming their own ethnic and linguistic identity, such as trouble identifying with a language or incorrectly assessing their linguistic identity (such as a

heritage speaker of an endangered language becoming overwhelmed by the identity associated with the majority language and distancing themselves from the minority language because of a weaker knowledge of that language). Scholars have examined complex practices of the individual in the processes of identity construction and identity negotiation (Compton-Lilly, Papoi, Venegas, Hamman & Schwabenbauer 2017), I argue that Russian heritage speakers may be involved in similar processes of identity construction and negotiation, especially in cases such as these, where external conflicts, such as the extinction of a language or war, may call a speakers linguistic identity into question. The effects of this construction and negotiation are untold for this population of speakers but would serve our understanding of heritage speakers and our ability to serve them through education.

Beyond markers of ethnicity lie the tumultuous landscape of racial diversity. Doerr and Kumagai (2014) explored "the interconnections between race and the notion of the heritage language speaker, and the effects of those interconnections in individuals caught in these categories" (p. 89). These authors offered an often-forgotten perspective of an individual whose race was seen to clash with his heritage, an individual caught in the crosshairs of an intersectional identity. Particularly striking about this case was the *othering* of an individual despite their technical belonging to a group, which Doerr and Kumagai (2014) described as a "mismatch between perceived race and expected language one speaks, as well as a case of perceived race overtaking identification of a heritage language speaker" (p. 89). This conflict is universal, as identifiers such as ethnicity or nationality grow increasingly complex and race, or perceived race, continue to carry an abundance of social consequences for *othered* individuals. Like Japan, Russia is not generally considered a place of racial diversity, however, the diasporas from Russia as well as immigration to the region have surely birthed speakers who find themselves in a situation similar to the

case discussed in Doerr and Kumagai (2014). A focus on race in relation to linguistic identity is lacking from current Russian heritage language research but would go a long way to illuminating the diversity of lived experiences for this group of speakers.

As described in Kramsch (1998), "language acquires a symbolic value beyond its pragmatic use and becomes a totem of a cultural group," whether that be through "the exercise of national or colonial power," "the deliberate, centralized pressure of a melting pot ideology," or "when one language supplants others through centralized deliberate planning or diffuse societal forces," the end result is that "the totemization of the dominant language leads to the stigmatization of the minority languages" (p. 74). This reality is a double-edged sword for speakers who claim or are even linked to conflicting identities. We can see more than one of these forces of linguistic oppression impacting heritage speakers of Russian at multiple points, which very likely may lead to anxiety for speakers.

According to Evseeva (2009) "Language is the main medium for the definition, preservation and transmission of social experience[12]" and "national and ethnic identity must be considered in close connection with the language, since it is one of the most important conditions for the existence of any social community[13]" (p. 2). Subsequently, the complexity of the national and ethnic identities of heritage speakers of Russian must be considered in a more explicit and extensive manner in order to form any hope of a complete linguistic profile of heritage speakers of Russian, given the distinct and intensive link between these identities, community, and social experience.

[12] Original text: "Язык представляет собой основную среду определения, сохранения и передачи социального опыта…"

[13] Original text: "…циональную и этническую идентичность необходимо рассматривать в тесной связи с языком, так как именно он является одним из важнейших условий существования любой социальной общности."

Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

This paper has reviewed existing Russian heritage language and foreign language anxiety research, in addition to larger issues of heritage language identity and the unique elements of anxiety heritage language learning fosters, in order to illuminate the areas in which further study is needed. As discussed, a focus on Russian heritage language learning anxiety, with an eye towards identity, in conjunction with existing works detailing technical components of language output or comparisons with native and foreign language speakers, would only add to the facets of the presently crafted profile of a Russian heritage speaker. While past research has contributed to the current understanding of heritage language learning, there are bounds to be made in understanding the role of identity in Russian heritage language learning, which is especially pertinent, given the intricate linguistic landscape of modern Russia and surrounding countries.

Additionally, we have discussed the ways in which heritage speakers inhabit more than one space in the practice and learning of their respective languages, and thus the next pertinent path is to intentionally consider the multiplicity of cross-sections that impact an individual's access (inhibited or unfettered) to their identified heritage language. I suggest not only further investigation of Russian heritage language anxiety, as other heritage language studies, but also work specifically looking into the elements of identity and the imagined dichotomy between national and heritage language. Both factors are of particular interest in the Russian context because of the diversity of the country's peoples and the tumultuous dynamics of ownership and belonging at play as a result of that diversity. In the context of Russian heritage speakers in the United States, ethnic, national, and racial affiliations are still further complicated in this melting pot environment, further warranting

thorough examination in order to form a more complete profile of a heritage speaker of Russian.

While this work has focused primarily on heritage speakers and learners of Russian, the issues that accompany the complex relationship between language and identity, particularly as it exists in relation to race, ethnicity, and nationality, are universal to heritage speakers across the globe. I have emphasized the case of Russian heritage speakers in part due to the complex linguistic landscape that colors the existence of these speakers, however, similar or similarly intricate situations exist around the world that impact heritage speakers of countless minority languages. As indigenous languages inch closer and closer to extinction, investigating the processes that may discourage a heritage language speaker from becoming a heritage language learner may help to strengthen society's link to and hold on these languages. Only through such understanding of the processes and impediments to heritage language learning and teaching can we begin to adequately understand the distinctly cumbersome task heritage language learners occupying an intersectional identity face when attempting to gain a deeper knowledge of or reconnect to their heritage language.

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